# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

## BIBLE TRANSLATION IN AO NAGA

A. Bendangyabang Ao, D.Min.

## 1. AO NAGA: PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

Ao is a language of the Naga group of languages within the Tibeto-Burman family. This language is mainly spoken in the state of Nagaland, India. However, the speakers of this language are found in major metropolitan cities of India. With growing literacy, and with enthusiasm to develop their language and maintain its distinct identity, a good number of the speakers of this language write a variety of literature in this language. Strictly speaking, however, the literacy work between the Ao and other Naga peoples was initiated only after the advent of the Christian missionaries from America in 1872. The spread of the gospel among the Naga peoples encouraged the writing of the hitherto unwritten languages. The missionaries who served these peoples developed script systems for most of the Naga languages.

Ao Nagas appear to have migrated to their present habitat in the state of Nagaland from Mongolia through the Southeast Asia sometime in AD 400 (Bendangyabang, pp. 33-32). Ao Naga was primarily a preliterate language until the missionaries introduced the writing system. Oral tradition of the Ao Nagas indicates that the Ao Nagas had their own writing system in the past, but a dog ate the writings that were in a leather parchment, during the process of Ao migration to the present land. The tradition also states, and we all know it by experience, that the dogs like to eat bones and leather. The Ao Nagas have a good memory of the past, and they transmit this knowledge of the past constantly through narration.

## 2. MISSIONARY ENDEAVOR AMONG AO NAGAS

In 1872, an American Baptist (Northern) missionary, Edward Winter Clark, came to the Ao people in Molungkimong village from his mission headquarters in Sibsagar, Assam. His Assamese interpreter, Godhula Rufus Brown, assisted Dr. Clark in this effort of reaching out to the Ao people. There were already 9 Ao Nagas who accepted Christ as the Lord and Savior and had been baptized on November 10, 1872 in Sibsagar. On December 22, 1872, Dr. Clark and his interpreter Brown performed the Baptism and Holy Communion among the villagers of Molungkimong, and organized the

new believers into a Christian fellowship.

Clark settled for good in the Ao land in 1876. He initiated the development of Ao literature and the translation of the Bible into Ao. Ao was not written until that time. Clark had to study the language as spoken by the people, and observe the speech habits of the Ao people. His problem was to establish a mental connection in his mind first of all linking the speech of the people to some writing system so that he could work out a correspondence between the two. Clark chose the Roman script to represent the sounds of Ao language. He started putting the Ao "junglee" dialect into literary form using most of the letters used in the English alphabet.

In 1878, two years after Clark chose to settle down among the Ao people, his wife, Mary Mead Clark, also joined him. She realized the need to open a school in order to acculturate the Ao people with the world outside, far beyond the Ao land. This further hastened the development of Ao literature. In order to teach the students, Clark and Mary formulated and printed first Ao Naga alphabet and simple grammar in their hand printing press in 1880. Along with this Clark also started translating the Bible into Ao language. That is how the Bible translation work in Ao Naga was started.

## 3. CLARK AND HIS WIFE MARY:THE PIONEER MISSIONARIES AND LINGUISTS

After putting the spoken Ao language into writing, Clark and Mary began their Bible translation and other literary works in Ao language. For this they took the help of Ao elders who could communicate with them in broken Assamese or in broken English. Gradually both Clark and Mary learned the Ao language. This helped them tremendously in their translation work. They began to understand the intricacies of Ao speech. They started comparing and contrasting Ao language with their own mother tongue.

After about 11 years of severe limitations and hardships, Clark and Mary printed the first translation of the Gospel of Matthew in 1883. The printing of the Gospel of John followed in 1906, and the first Ao Dictionary came out in 1911. The gospels of Matthew and Mark were reprinted in 1919, and the Gospel of Luke in 1920. The first edition of the New Testament came out in 1929. Subsequent editions were brought out in 1931 and 1949.

## 4. AO NAGA PARTICIPATION IN THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

Some Ao people assisted the missionaries ably. Notable among them were Idijungba, Subonglemba, Kilep, and Allem. Ao has had several dialectal differences. Clark chose the jungli Ao dialect to translate the Bible and its literature. He followed the method of literal translation to a great extent. Therefore, even today, several words and their meanings need some interpretation. Clark and Mary used the method of dynamic equivalence very sparingly.

Mr. Rongsennuken was officially appointed the first Ao Naga translator in the 1920s. He translated most of the epistles and some of the Gospels again. After the death of Clark, the missionaries R.B Longwell and C.W.Smith, and the first Ao Naga Head Master of the Mission school Mr. Mayangnokcha

took up the responsibility for the translation of the Bible. Other missionaries who came after them and were stationed in Impur continued to pursue the translation work with vigor and enthusiasm. During this period the missionaries concentrated on the translation of the books in New and Old Testaments.

## 5. NATURE OF EARLY TRANSLATION

The translation work pursued by the missionaries of the later period used the colloquial terms used by the people. The use of common people's language helped speed up the translation work. In places where Ao did not have an equivalent meaning for the Bible word, the translators borrowed the English word and used it with the Ao spelling. They also adopted the Assamese or Hindi spoken spelling. The following examples will illustrate this point:

*Fork* in I Samuel 13.21 was used as it is in English.

*Powder* in Song of Solomon 3.6 was used as it is in English.

*Mandrakes* in Song of Solomon 7.13 was used as it is in English.

*Nurse* in II Samuel 4.4 was translated as 'aya' as used in Assamese.

*Royal post* in II Chronicles was translated as 'sentry dak' as used in Assamese.

*Sellers* in Nehemiah 13:20 was translated as 'dokantar' as used in Assamese.

*Sackloth* in Psalm 35.13 was translated as 'toila' as used in Assamese.

*Hammer* in Psalm 74.6 was translated as 'matrol' used in Assamese.

*Bridle* in Proverbs 26.3 was translated as 'lakam' as used in Assamese and Hindi.

*Hinges* in Proverbs 26.14 was translated as 'kepja' as used in Assamese and Hindi.

## 6. AO LITERATURE COMMITTEE

The Literature Committees constituted by the leaders of the various people groups in North East India have been very influential in developing literatures in the hitherto unwritten languages. These committees have been led by young men who were passionate about the development of their languages as fit vehicles of expression. These committees were greatly involved in the translation of the Bible and in the production of textbooks, etc.

The Ao Christian Literature Committee started in 1950. The first meeting of the Committee was held on the 7th January 1950. The Ao Mungdang appointed the Committee during its session in December 1949 in Kangtsung village. The translation committee members included Mr. Shilukaba as the Chairman. The first meeting of the Committee decided to print 10,000 copies of the Ao Naga Holy Bible as a revised and enlarged edition. This was done under the supervision of the missionary Dr. C.E Hunter, and Mr. Nokdenlemba as the Translator. The Old Testament books were distributed among various persons for revision and translation. Not all these translators were theologically trained. But those who were not theologically trained had their secular degrees and had been working in government service.

The Committee met several times for consultation and to pass necessary resolutions. A decision was taken in the second meeting that the translation work should be completed within the stipulated period. If a translator failed to complete his work within the stipulated period, Mr. Nokdenlemba would complete the unfinished work. The focus of the committee was to translate only those books of the Old Testament that had not been translated so far. Thus the following books were taken up for translation. The names of the persons who were assigned the translation work are given within parentheses against each book: Psalms (Mayangnokcha); Proverbs (Medemkaba); Judges (Subongmeiba); I and II Samuel (Shilukaba); I and II Kings (Yajenlemba); I and II Chronicles (Imnukluba), Job (Bendangwati); Ezra, and Esther: (Mopumeren); Jeremiah (Longritangchetba); Nehemiah (Tekasosang), and Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon (Stephen). The Committee also decided to make changes in the translation done previously for the book of Psalms. It was originally translated as *David ken* (Song of David). Now this was changed to *Temungsang ken* (Psalm).

The Committee also appointed Bendangwati, Yajenlemba, and Mayangnokcha to undertake an entire revision of all the books translated already, and to read the manuscripts of all the translations done. In addition, the Committee also resolved to use the following: *Kibua* for the 'Lord'; *Yihova* for 'Jehova'; *Yisu* for 'Jesu'; *Mari* for 'Maria,' *Yirusalem* for 'Jerusalem,' etc. This took the nomenclature used in the translation closer to the original tongues of the Bible.

With help from all the persons mentioned above, and some persons not mentioned, it took more than 14 years to complete the first printing of the entire Holy Bible as a single volume in Ao Naga language. Printing of the volume was done in England, and the size of the printed book was chosen to be the same size as the New Assamese Bible.

## 7. FURTHER REVISION

Further revision of the Ao translation of the New Testament was assigned to the following persons: Gospels of Matthew, Gospel of Mark (Imtiluen); Gospel of Luke, and Gospel of John (Takosungba); Acts, Romans (Mopumeren); I and II Corinthians (Remasangba); I and II Timothy, I and II Peter (Ayutemjen); I John, and Revelation (Kijungluba).

Majority of the translators came from the following professions: government officials, teachers, evangelists, and missionaries (foreigners from America).

## 8. DEDICATION OF THE TRANSLATION

By God's abundant grace, and with all the efforts and diligent work of the lead translator Nokdenlemba, who was assisted by Bendangwati, the Holy Bible in Ao Naga was dedicated for public use on 29th November 1964. Three thousand copies were sold within one hour of its release. Ao Nagas were thirsty for the Word of God in their own language, and when they heard that the Holy Bible was being released in their own language they borrowed money and thronged the sales counter. Literally it was a mad rush.

## 9. IMPACT OF THE TRANSLATION

The release of the Holy Bible in Ao Naga not only nourished the Ao people spiritually it also helped the growth of the language in significant ways. Ao language writers started writing their language using the diction, styles, grammar and spellings used in the Bible translation. Teachers in Ao schools set their standards by the language used in the Bible. In a language that lacked written creative literature, the stories from the Bible became the major literary works. The metaphor and idiom that the translation used came very handy for those who wished to write personal and official communications in Ao Naga. The language is endowed with very many literary and language forms and functions. The translation gave several models for the textbooks to be used. The benefits of the translation are boundless in time and space for the Ao Naga people.

People with a simple knowledge of their language, but committed to their God and to the task, have accomplished something really tremendous. Their goal was to preach the Gospel, but the net result went beyond what they anticipated. The missionaries perhaps did not realize that theirs was a great and pioneering work in Ao Naga. The pain that they underwent sitting with the village tribals, ignored so far by the outside world as the headhunting marauders, in places not easily accessible, and crafting the alphabet of the language they barely knew, was fully rewarded by the gratefulness of Ao Nagas for the service rendered to them. Equally important is the contribution of the few literate Ao Nagas who spent several years of their life doing the translation work faithfully, with no personal gain. They did all this in addition to their regular official work. Today we see that the whole Ao people come together under one literary and written language and spelling despite several dialectal and other linguistic problems.

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*A. Bendangyabang Ao, D.Min.*
*Acts Academy of Higher Education*
*P.O.Box 9529, 54 MIG, KHB Colony*
*5th Block, Koramangala*
*Bangalore 560095*
*India*
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## WILLIAM CAREY'S CONTRIBUTION TO INDIAN LANGUAGES

### P. Sam Daniel, Ph.D.

### 1. WILLIAM CAREY (1761-1834)

William Carey was born in England in 1761, arrived in India in 1793, and died in Serampore, near Kolkata (Calcutta) in 1834. Carey had very humble beginnings. He was only a shoemaker, rather a cobbler as he used to say, since he was only mending the shoes of others. But his love of people all over the world, born out of his love of Jesus Christ, and his passion to preach the gospel of Jesus to all the nations, led him to India. He had such passion for knowledge early in his life that he taught himself Latin and a few other subjects. Over the years this love of people and Jesus helped him to learn several Indian languages and enabled him to translate the Bible into many languages of north and east India. He was first introduced to the Indian languages through Bengali, which he learned while working as a manager of an indigo factory in a Bengali village. He also had the help of a musnshi to learn Bengali and Sanskrit. From the beginning the goal of Carey was to translate the Bible into Indian languages. So, as soon as he started learning the Bengali language and Sanskrit and had developed some confidence regarding the structures and words of these languages, he started the translation of the New Testament into Bengali. In the process Carey became an excellent grammarian and lexicologist of many Indo-Aryan languages, but it soon turned that his translation skills were far behind his knowledge of grammar and lexicon.

### 2. PROTESTANT MISSIONARY ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING LANGUAGE USE

One of the important assumptions of the Protestant missionaries has been that "non-Christian peoples must be approached in their own language. For that reason the missionary must possess as good a knowledge as possible of the local forms of speech" (Neill 1985:191). It is also expected that "the missionary must be sedulous to acquaint himself with the mind and customs of the people among whom he dwells" (Neill 1985:192). A third assumption of the early missionaries to India was that "in a land where the vast majority of the inhabitants are illiterate, (the widespread diffusion of the Gospel among the peoples of India) can be achieved only by oral proclamation" (Neill 1885:192). These assumptions were questioned by the leading Catholic missionaries of the time. Abbe Dubois, for example, questioned the wisdom of translating the Bible (especially the Old Testament) and distributing the copies among the Hindus and Muslims, because, according to him, the translations were not only imperfect but often stopped the Hindus from wanting to know more about Jesus because they did not find anything therein that would make them to give up their religion in preference to Christianity. On the other hand, a strong theological position of the Protestant missionaries has been that the Bible "is in itself the great instrument for the conversion of non-Christians, and that therefore it must be made available to Indians, Christian and non-Christian alike, at the earliest possible date" (Neill 1985:195).

### 3. THE TRANSLATION STRATEGY ADOPTED BY CAREY

Carey's strength lies in envisioning the need and to go after fulfilling that need. He recognized the fact that India is populated by different linguistic groups and that

each of these groups needs to be given the translation of the Bible in their own tongue. He also realized that the Indian vernaculars were yet to be fully developed as vehicles of learning. The Protestant missionary assumptions demanded that the Bible be made available in the vernacular. Sanskrit was the preferred medium and target of learning in most parts of India in the traditional schooling system, and the modern Indian languages were struggling to find their own place. During the Mughal rule, Persian became the official language of the rulers, and Hindustani developed into a powerful medium of interaction, but the regional languages of north India had not received much official patronage for their development. There was the need for the Christian missionaries to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to the multitudes of people and this desire on their part co-incided with the need and thirst for the development of the Indian vernaculars.

Carey's love for the Bengali vernacular, (he thought that Bengali is intrinsically superior to all other spoken Indian languages,' Neill 1985:191), did not stop him from seeing the importance of Sanskrit, especially for the translation of the Bible into various Indian languages. Carey learned Sanskrit for many years, and translated parts of the *Ramayana* into English. His plan was to first translate the Bible into Sanskrit and use this reliable version for translation into other Indian languages. In several ways this plan was to be lauded. Translations of the theological concepts, names of the characters in the Bible and places, controlling the nuances of the terms used through a dependence on the Sanskrit terms were some of the advantages of this approach. It may not be out of place to point out that such similar techniques would be followed by the various Kranth Academies in India after independence. He hoped that, after the translation of the New Testament into Sanskrit in 1808, "the work could now be extended to all the languages of which Sanskrit is the parent" (Neill 1985:195).

That this strategy is now increasingly questioned by the translators of the Bible does not minimize the practicality of the design. A translator does not work as an island. He seeks information and terms from various sources. Often the translation in an adjacent language helps him to arrive at the right word to represent faithfully the theological intent of the word under translation. While it is true that most of Carey's translation is now passed over, no body could deny that his was a valiant attempt and that because of his attempt to coherently present long texts in prose closer to the spoken language, modern Indo-Aryan languages of India were blessed.

## 4. CAREY'S CONTRIBUTION TO BENGALI

My focus in this paper is only the contributions made by Carey to Indian languages. (I do not deal with Carey's involvement in the controversy regarding the introduction of English as the medium of instruction in schools around the country. Carey took the position that is appealing to most of us today. At that time, however, the terminology to refer to that concept was *European education*. Carey argued that in the schools European education should be the substance, but the vernacular, the medium or the vehicle for imparting that education.)

Through the publication of *Bengali Colloquies*, written with the help of Bengali scholars, Carey showed the power of the colloquial Bengali as an effective medium of communication. It is Carey, more than any other European scholar-missionary, who really showed to the natives of India that prose could be an effective medium. As Thirumalai (2001, in his forthcoming article in *Language in India*) shows, long ago, in south India, Ziegenbalg, the first ever Protestant missionary to India, took upon himself the onerous task of translating the Bible into Tamil. He chose the medium of prose for his translation much against the traditional practice of saying profound things through the medium of poetry. It was the necessity to preach the good news of Jesus Christ to all, not just the educated or upper classes, that made him to choose the medium of prose for the translation of the Bible. It was the very same necessity that forced these translators to base their translation on the colloquial language rather than on the formal style of the language. Moreover, the Bible itself was written mostly in prose. But these missionary-translators went one step further: even where the Bible had in its original poems or poetic language, these translators chose to translate these pieces in ordinary colloquial language, mostly in order to achieve communicative efficiency.

Just this act of choosing prose as the preferred form for expressing messages in long texts has enabled the modern Indian vernaculars to cross the traditional boundaries and break into a new world and establish their identity. It has enabled every literate Indian to compose his thoughts in writing without the cultivated exquisitiveness of

poetry and express himself in much easier way.

Carey was instrumental in translating the Bible into Marathi, Hindi, Oriya, Panjabi, Assamese, and Gujarati. While others did help, Carey was also totally involved in all these translations! Carey learned Telugu and Kannada to bring out the translations of the Bible in these languages. Later on work on Pashto and Khasi were undertaken. On a rough estimate we may say that Carey either worked or influenced heavily the translation of the Bible into as many as thirtyfive languages. And in all these languages and dialects (several translations were made in to the "dialects" of Hindi). Carey was breaking new grounds and laying the path for the development of these languages as vehicles of education. It is no wonder than that Rabindranath Tagore, himself a master of Bengali, wrote: "I must acknowledge that whatever has been done towards the revival of the Bengali language and its improvement must be attributed to Dr. Carey and his colleagues. Carey was the pioneer of the revived interest in the vernaculars" (Carey 1923).

Das Gupta writes: "A living language can never be regulated by artificial rules borrowed from a dead language, however closely connected they might be with each other and Carey in giving full scope to colloquial and temporal variations, shows himself fully alive to this fact ... yet one can never wholly dispense with Sanskrit grammarian framing a grammar for its vernacular offshoot. A truly scientific grammar of Bengali must avoid these extremes and Carey who had a wonderful knowledge of the vernacular as it was spoken adn written as well as of the classical Sanskrit, succeeded to a great extent in steering through the middle path" (Das Gupta 1993).

## 5. TO CONCLUDE

William Carey came to India because he loved the people and wanted to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was not personally successful in converting the Hindus and Muslims to the Christian faith in large numbers. In fact his score on this count is next to nothing! That did not deter him from finding other avenues of service to His Lord and to the people he came to serve. Through the translation of the Bible and through his various other publications he enriched modern Indian languages, encouraged prose as the preferred medium of expression for education, introduced a strategy of translation based on Sanskrit, and established procedures of translation such as team work. But he was not satisfied by all these linguistic efforts, which came so naturally to him.

Carey pioneered selfless work against certain social practices such as infanticide and sati (suttee). Along with his colleagues, John Marshman and Ward, Carey had been unremitting in his endeavor to draw the attention of the government to the practice of sati. Support received in the person of Raja Ram Mohan Roy brightened the prospects for the abolition of sati. Carey with the help of the learned pundits connected with the Governor-General's College in Calcutta, collected from the Hindu sacred books the passages upon which this custom was believed to have been raised. These investigations showed him that sati was a rite simply encouraged as a virtue and not enjoined as a duty (Marshman 1873:99). The vernacular newspapers pioneered by the Serampore missionaries were used to enlighten the minds of the Indians. At length, their continuous fight against this practice paved the way for the abolition of suttee (Carec 1923:334).

"Carey was preparing to preach, a courier from the Governor-General arrived with an urgent dispatch, an order in council which Carey was requested immediately to translate into Bengali. It was nothing less than the famous edict abolishing suttee throughout Britis dominions in India. Springing to his feet and throwing off his black coat he cried, "No church for today!" Without the loss of a moment he sent an urgent request to one of his colleagues to take service, summoned his pundit and then settled down to his momentous task. For twenty-five years he has been urging the necessity of this law and there should be no further loss of time and life - if he could prevent it. "If I delay an hour to translate and publsih this many a widows'life may be sacrificed," he said.By eveing the task ws finished" (Walker 1951:252-253).

Carey was not just a great linguist, but a great lover of people and God.

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*P. Sam Daniel, Ph.D.*
*Acts Academy of Higher Education*
*P.O. Box 9529*
*Bangalore 560095*
*India*
*Email:actsinst@blr.vsnl.net.in*

# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

## LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT IN INDIA: SOME CHALLENGES

J.C.Sharma, Ph.D.

## 1. IN THE BEGINNING

History shows that man felt the need to communicate with his fellowmen through means other than speech. Various forms of picture writing were used for a long time in different parts of the world to record the happenings, before scripts were devised. The communities of cave dwellers wished to make records of their lives and they left the complex drawings and paintings on the walls of their caves. Over the time, the need to keep records and to send messages increased and the idea of indicating objects by means of pictures was further developed.

Various forms of picture writing were used for a long time in different parts of the world. For instance, the ancient Egyptians invented a kind of picture writing called "hieroglyphs," which means "sacred carving." Besides, the Chinese still have a kind of picture writing that is known as ideographic. The symbols used in this system are called characters, and these characters are used for every kind of objects and every kind of ideas. Some consider that, because the characters are based on ideas, it is very difficult to learn the Chinese writing system. It is claimed that one has to master almost as many characters as there are ideas! This is not really true. It is true, however, that learning the Chinese characters takes time. The number of characters runs into thousands. The advantage of a system like this in which the characters do not represent the sounds but ideas is that a Chinese from one region may not be able to follow the speech from another region, but will be able to read it exactly as the numeral 5 is read as five by an English from any part of the world, paanch by a Hindi speaker wherever he is, and aidu by a Kannada speaker whether he is in India or in America.

## 2. AT PRESENT

At present, most countries and people groups do not use picture writing except for travel guidelines, as road signs, and signs in the airports, etc. The letters of a script are learned in a fixed order and each letter usually represents a sound of the language. Alphabetic writing systems seem to be found in many languages.

"Alphabetic writing systems are those in which graphemes typically have reference

That is, an alphabetic system has a one-to-one correspondence between the phonemes and graphemes. Each grapheme represents, ideally speaking, only one phoneme. This is the ideal adopted in the phonemic/phonetic transcription followed by the linguists This helps maintain one-to-one relationship between the writing system and the spoken form of the language

The invention and adoption of the alphabetic system of writing is a remarkable development in human history, as with a limited number of letters of the alphabet in a language, we can write unlimited words. With the invention of the printing press, alphabets were stabilized and reading and writing became common today. It is now hard to imagine life without the alphabet, and communication without writing.

## 3. NATURE OF THE WRITING SYSTEM

There appears to be a good deal of confusion in the public mind about the relation between language and script This is because the matters concerning languages are mostly charged with emotion and the emotional fervor is transferred to the discussion of alphabet and script. A little reflection would, however, show that language and a script are completely different things. "Script is only the outer clothing of language," says Pattanayak (1980:59). (To be very frank, this is a little exaggerated statement, for, the spelling that is dependent upon the script used is known to regulate and represent certain underlying phonological rules of the language.) Language is intrinsic to the human beings but not so the alphabet. Script is independent of any specific language; different languages may use the same script. For example, Sanskrit, Marathi, and Hindi use the Devanagari script The same language may use different script at different points in time or space. For example, Sindhi is written in Devanagari as well as Perso-Arabic scripts Many languages in the world share the same script. For example, English, German, French, Ao Naga, Thadou, and Mizo languages are written using the Roman script.

An alphabet is a set of basic distinct visual symbols. An alphabet is specific to a language. The alphabet drawn from the alphabetic script has relatively a smaller inventory than the one drawn from the syllabic script, which, in turn, is smaller than that drawn from the logographic script. The Sanskrit alphabet developed in the course of many centuries and was perfected almost two thousand years ago. Not so the script. At one time, this alphabet was written in the Brahmi script. Soon after, there appeared on the scene the Kharoshti script. For almost a thousand years, both Brahmi and Kharoshti existed side by side. There also have been other scripts that have been used for the visual representation of the Sanskrit alphabet. We have thus many scripts for the Sanskrit language but all of them used the same alphabet

Many Indian languages have inherited or adopted the same Sanskrit alphabet as their own, but with varying visual representations. The same alphabet is visually represented in one way in Devanagari, in another way in Bengali, and in still other ways in Gujarati, Assamese, or Oriya. There is no difference among Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, and Oriya as far as the underlying alphabet is concerned, but the scripts in which these languages are written differ from one another This proves that any alphabet can be written

in any script and, therefore it follows that any language can be written in any script, provided the alphabets have the necessary sounds. If a language does not have the sounds already visually represented in the script, then the relevant letter in the script may be dropped, or some suitable modification made to account for the differences. Sounds may be added or deleted or modified and the visual symbols invented or adopted to represent these sounds

Is there any fixed direction for writing? No. For example, while most languages are written from left to right, Arabic and Urdu are written from right to left, and Chinese is written vertically.

The arrangement of the alphabet for presenting the words in a dictionary may be arbitrary or based on some linguistic principles like based on the point or manner of articulation Though some scripts like the Roman and Devanagari scripts have a fixed arrangement of the alphabet, it is not necessary for a language that uses that script to follow that arrangement and order of elements. The arrangement or the order of the words in a dictionary or even in a script may be determined by regional or national considerations Vietnamese is a good example of this situation. However, often the languages that have been given a script, try to follow the order of elements of the language from which such scripts have been adopted. This is rather unnaturally imposed over such recipient languages.

## 4. CREATING A WRITING SYSTEM

The language planner faces the issue of creating a writing system when he has to devise an alphabet or script for an unwritten language. He has two choices regarding the orthography, namely, to invent a new system or adapt an existing system. In each choice, there are several alternatives before him, based on the criteria of efficiency, economy, acceptance, and relation to other systems.

## 5. EFFICIENCY OF THE WRITING SYSTEM

In terms of the efficiency of the writing system, many issues arise:

1. What type of script is easier and speedier to write?
2. What type of writing system is easier to read?
3. Whether the writing system should have one form of representation for printing and another form of representation for handwriting, etc.?
4. Whether the writing system should have one letter for one distinct sound, that is, one phoneme for one letter, or more letters for a phoneme? Should we have one letter for two or more phonemes? Should we have a phoneme represented by more than a letter (combination of letters)? Should we have a phoneme represented several distinct letters depending upon the occurrence of the sound/letter?

When it comes to the speed in writing, we need to decide whether one can write more speedily with the horizontal way of writing or with the vertical way of writing or with the combination of both. We need to consider whether the writing from left to right be more convenient than writing from right to left. We need to consider which of way of writing is economical in terms of time saved in writing and learning to read. Any script that has lesser number of strokes will save time in writing. It is difficult to say without any research whether it is easy to write from left to right or right to left, and with what script one can read and write speedily. However, within the Indian context,

most languages are written from left to right, and the international language taught all over India, English, is also written left to right. So a practical decision could be to write from left to right to be in conformity with the other languages that a student may learn in the school. The question of super- and sub-scripts needs to be addressed as well. Most Indian script systems adopt the super- and sub-script letters for the combination of several consonants. Often, the students in the elementary schools face difficulty in mastering this arrangement. It is also more cumbersome to print and read these letters in print.

One also has to see how a particular script is suited to the need of modern techniques of typewriting, word-processing, and printing presses. If a script has a number of diacritic marks, then, it lessens the legibility of the material by blurring the alignment, etc., and it creates confusion while reading. At the same time it takes more time for typing and composing in such scripts. While writing, there is every chance of forgetting some diacritic marks, and this leads to ambiguity. So, for more efficiency, it is better to write horizontally in a straight line than writing one symbol over the other. In some scripts, there is a convention to use some diacritic above or below to mark the vowels. People generally miss writing these diacritics when they write, and it creates confusion when reading the written text. While by convention and tradition people may be able to retrieve the originally intended text, school children and the adults with nominal educational will face problem in this area. Also if we are intending to give a new script to a hitherto unwritten language, it may be better to adopt a system that is straightforward and simpler, instead of hoping to foster a tradition and convention of some complexity over the years.

From a technological point of view, if one letter is written in the same way throughout it is more efficient and economical. This will avoid providing for allographs in the typewriters. If there are different ways of writing and printing, as found in the Roman script or Kannada script, some additional problems might be created while learning to read and write. In the Roman script, as adopted in English, there are two types of capital letters, and two types of small letters. In the Perso-Arabic script, letters change their shape when they occur in combination with other letters. This poses some problem for typewriting and printing. Calligraphers have found it time-consuming and more expensive to accommodate such conventions. Hence there have been several reformatory steps taken for printing purposes.

## 6. TOTAL REPLACEMENT OR REFORMATION?

If script creates confusion and cannot represent the sounds distinct, and at the same time it takes more time for reading and writing, and is difficult to adopt for printing purposes, then the script should be modified to fulfill the needs of the community, or it should be replaced by another better script. But total replacement has never been the goal of any script reformation movement. Communities all over the world do not support even the minor moves towards script reformation. Just as language functions as the identity marker for a people group, the script system also functions as the identity marker for the language. Sometimes the script functions as the identity marker for the people group. Attempts at changing the script for reasons of efficiency are seen to be steps endangering the identity of the people group This has effects across nations even.

## 7. ECONOMY

The simple law of economics, more the production less the cost, does not easily apply in the case of scripts. If one script is used for all the languages, it may become economical, and pedagogically useful. However, the application of economic principles does not find acceptance even within a single nation where there are many languages in use for centuries. And these languages have their own rich literature, history, and arts. They also have a strong tradition of insisting on using their own scripts, just we find it stated in Tolkappiyam, an ancient Tamil grammar, written perhaps two thousands years ago

## 8. ARGUMENTS FOR A SINGLE SCRIPT

The arguments for a single script for many languages within a political unit such as a nation run like this: The view that each language should have a separate script in order to keep its identity distinct may not be correct. As we can see, the Roman script is used for so many European languages such as Dutch, Spanish, German, French, Italian, English, etc. Script is simply the outer garment of the language, a garment that could be changed and yet the integrity of the language maintained. Sanskrit, Marathi, and Hindi are written in Devanagari without losing their identities  One and the same script for the languages in one socio-political region is economical and pedagogically viable as the people do not have to re-learn the scripts and the same printing press in a particular linguistic region could be used for the production of materials in other linguistic regions. Two or more scripts for one language within the same political region creates unnecessary boundaries, and the written text in the same language, when presented in two different scripts, creates mutual unintelligibility among the people speaking the same language. Two scripts across nations are also uneconomical and inconvenient in the sense that a person interested in reading the literature written in his language from across the international border will not have an easy access to it, because the literature is written in a script that he cannot read or write. For example, Panjabi in India is written in the Gurumukhi script and it is written in the Perso-Arabic script in Pakistan. Sindhi is written in the Devanagari and Perso-Arabic scripts in India, whereas it is written only in the Perso-Arabic script in Pakistan. We have instances that show that one and the same language written in one and the same script is economical and convenient: Hindi is written in Devanagari in India, Fiji, and Mauritius. Tamil is written in Tamil script in India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, and Malaysia. Urdu is written in the same script in India and Pakistan. English is written in Roman script in the U S.A., Great Britain, Australia, etc.

## 9. NEED FOR A SINGLE SCRIPT IN CERTAIN DOMAINS

As pointed out above, one and the same single script for all the languages of a political unit such as nation is economical and pedagogically useful, but this may not be feasible. Of course, learning a script does not mean learning the language as such. However, it can certainly help learn another language in some ways. In certain domains, it is useful to have a uniform script throughout the country. For example, the signboards, milestones, and the name of the places that one comes across, etc. A suitable international system needs to be evolved for this purpose. The librarians and researchers may not know all the scripts and it is useful for them if the titles and authors are

transliterated in one common script. There are other areas also wherein the use of a common script across languages will be a lot of help.

## 10. CHOICE OF SCRIPT FOR THE UNWRITTEN LANGUAGES

There are many unwritten languages spread over various regions in the country. No state is without the unwritten languages, and no state is without the minority people groups whose languages are yet to be systematically studied and writing systems provided. Much progress has been achieved since independence, but there is a lot to be done in this area, if the stated goal of our Republic that every body should be literate is to be achieved. Devising script systems for the unwritten languages will help speed up the literacy drive among these peoples. The script systems will help in producing literacy and educational materials for the benefit of these people groups. Also having their own writing systems will help preserve these languages and enable the speakers of these languages to seek their rightful place in the Republic of India, and serve the country to their best abilities. It will be a tragedy if a human language is to be lost mainly because it does not have a writing system. There are signs that such a tragedy has already taken place in some cases within India.

In devising a suitable script system for an unwritten language, we should keep in view the socio-cultural setting of the language. The new script system should not make the language alien in its own setting. Linguistics prefers the script system that is based on the phonemics of the language. That is, one symbol per phoneme. But this may not be borne out by the perception of the speakers of that language. Pike's original position that orthography should be phonemic, and that there should be one to one correspondence between each phoneme and the symbolization of that phoneme (Pike 1947:208), is in many ways, impractical, although well thought out. The existing languages often follow their own course of development. And such developments may annoy a linguist who seeks always a neat pattern. People, however, find such irregularities as no irregularity at all. There is no guarantee that a well-designed script system will always retain the original neatness of pattern and rules, etc.

When one has to devise the script for an unwritten language, one may view the existing systems available. There are two options before him. The first one is to adopt a script from the existing ones, and the second option is to devise an altogether different script unique to this language. Both the trends have been noticed in devising script systems for the unwritten languages of India. Economic constraints often force dropping the second option. If a script is to be chosen from out of the existing ones, the question arises as to which script should be adopted. Should we adopt the script of the dominant language of the region wherein lies the socio-economic activities of the speakers of the unwritten language, or should we choose the script of the dominant national or international language? The choice has to be seen from the point of view of the speakers of that unwritten language and their attitude towards their particular script.

From the point of pedagogy and economy, the script of the dominant language of the region is preferable, as it will help the people to learn the regional language with some ease. It will be economical because the language materials can be printed in the existing printing presses. It may save

time in learning the regional language as well. But in some cases the speakers of an unwritten language may want to keep their own distinct identity and distinguish themselves from the dominant group by choosing an entirely different script. Psychological, social, cultural and political factors influence such decisions. When a script distinct from the script of the dominant regional language is to be adopted, one can think of the script of the next useful language, especially the language that the children from the people group will be required to learn in the school system. This may or may not be the dominant regional language  For example, the Bodo speakers of Assam prefer the Devanagari script for Bodo instead of the Assamese script that has immediate use pedagogically  But they seem to view that the Devanagari script will facilitate learning the Hindi language better at a later stage in the school system  The perception of the people group about the relevance and use of the script comes to guide it in choosing the script system for their language  Sometimes the speakers of a language trying to adopt a new script may not agree to reduce the number of letters from the borrowed script system although such letters may have no relevance for the writing of their language. They wish to retain the whole writing system as it is for practical convenience

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*J.C.Sharma, Ph.D.*
*Central Institute of Indian Languages*
*Manasagangotri*
*Mysore 570006*
*India*
*E-mail: ciil@giasbg01.vsnl.net.in. Please mark Attention: Dr. J.C.Sharma in the subject line.*

# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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## MULTILINGUALISM IN INDIA

### J. C. Sharma, Ph.D.

## 1. INDIAN MULTILINGUALISM: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Indian multilingualism dates back historically to ancient times when ethnic groups and races came in contact with one another through migration from one region to another. Although political compulsions and social re-structuring might have contributed a little to its growth, multilingualism in India was largely a product of close contact between the four language families from the earliest recorded history. This contact had resulted in the growth of India as a linguistic area with certain common features.

Co-existence of many languages, races, cultures, and religions has been the essence of Indian heritage. In contrast to this, language uniformity is considered necessary for the economic development in the West. To dissolve the linguistic diversities in the melting pot, and accepting exclusively the dominant language for all purposes such as education, law, administration, and mass communication, is not truly an Indian model

## 2. LANGUAGES OF INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

Sir G. A. Grierson carried out the Linguistic Survey of India (LSI) between 1866 and 1927. This survey identified 179 languages and 544 dialects. The 1951 Census, the first census after India attained its independence, listed 845 languages including dialects, out of which more than 100,000 persons spoke 60 languages/dialects.

A comprehensive account of the multiplicity of languages was presented in the 1961 census. This census adopted as its main reference the language classification of the Linguistic Survey of India. The 1961 Census returned 1652 mother tongues and classified them under 193 languages. These languages were identified as belonging to four different language families, namely, the Austric (20 languages), Dravidian (20 languages), Tibeto-Burman (98 languages), and Indo-Aryan (54) languages, and one return with a doubtful affiliation.

In the 1961 Census, 91°₀ of the population spoke one of the fifteen scheduled languages and this number rose to 95.58°₀ in the 1981 Census. In the 1991 Census, the returns of the mother tongues came to 10,400. These 10,400 raw returns were subjected to thorough scrutiny. This resulted in 1576 rationalized mother tongues, and 1796 names, which were treated as unclassified and relegated to the other mother tongues category. The 1576 rationalized mother tongues were regrouped following the linguistic methods under 114 languages (18 languages that are included in the VIII Schedule of the Constitution of India, and 96 other languages). 96.29°₀ of the total population of India has one of the Schedule VIII languages as their "mother tongue" and the rest (3.71°₀) speak the languages not listed in the Schedule VIII of the Constitution of India. 85 mother tongues are grouped under the Schedule VIII languages, and 131 mother tongues are grouped under the other 96 non-scheduled languages. As per the Third All India Education Survey, 58 languages find a place in the school curricula and 47 are used in public administration at one level or another. Newspapers are published in 87 languages and there are radio broadcasts in 91 languages

## 3. LANGUAGE SHIFT, LINGUISTIC PLURALISM, AND BILINGUALISM

Indian literary history shows that people used to switch between Pali and Sanskrit, Tamil and Sanskrit, and Ardhmagadhi and Sanskrit with ease. During the Mogul period, there were many scholars had mastered both Sanskrit and Persian/Arabic. Tulsidas, Vidyapati, and authors of Apabhramsa of the North, and the Azhwars and Nayanmars of the South emphasized the importance of the language styles spoken by the ordinary people, even as they used the language of high literature. Indian classical drama used dialects and 'standard' languages. Writers used Magadhi, Shaurseni, Prakrit, and Apabhramsa, even as they excelled in the use of Sanskrit. The pattern of language use seemed to be flexible depending upon what roles the individual was playing.

India is a pluralistic nation, in terms of ethnicity, culture, language and religion. India continues to manifest a high degree of multilingualism. The 1961 Census showed 9.5% of the incidence of bilingualism in the country. But this figure did not really portray the actual situation. It is not just the educated Indians who practice bilingualism. Semi-literate and the illiterate people also practice bilingualism. Bilingualism is not a recent phenomenon but it is attested throughout the Indian history. When we study the language returns in the Census, we find that a sizeable population of the people in each State speaks the dominant language of the neighboring State. This sizeable population is often bilingual and they continue to use their mother tongue while they learn and use the dominant language of the State in which they are settled. For example, in Andhra Pradesh, Telugu is the dominant State language, but we see a sizeable population of Kannada speakers (519,507), Marathi speakers (503,609), Oriya speakers (259, 947), and Tamil speakers (753,484). Similarly Telugu speakers are found in good number in Karnataka (3,325,062), Maharashtra (1,122,332), Orissa (665001), and Tamil Nadu (3,975,561).

## 4. COMPLEMENTARY NATURE OF INDIAN BILINGUALISM

Another significant feature of Indian bilingualism is that it is complementary. Thus, an individual may use a particular language at home, another in the neighborhood and the bazaar, and still another in certain formal domains such as education, administration, and the like. This is not only true of an individual but such patterns of selection of different languages for day to day use are revealed by the groups of populations as well. An individual usually has some mastery of his home language, and the regional/state language (when the home language is different from the regional/state language). In addition the languages of national and international communication, Hindi and English, are also part of the linguistic repertoire of a sizeable number of Indians. In India, linguistic diversity is not by accident, but it is inherited in the process of acquiring the composite culture of the nation. It is an integral part of the Indian composite culture.

## 5. MULTILINGUALISM AND INDIAN CULTURAL HISTORY

In Indian history, bilingualism has never been regarded as a social or individual deficiency. On the contrary, it has always been respected with great appreciation. Bilinguals were always respected as persons with superior qualifications. They were respected because they were supposed to communicate with speakers of two or more languages to transmit their thoughts. Bilingualism and multilingualism is recognized as a social need. In the past bilingualism and multilingualism helped people to propagate their faiths and religious practices. For example, Siddharth stressed the importance of Pali and Ardhmagadhi to nullify the importance of the Brahmanical concepts and their linguistic counterparts expressed mainly through the Sanskrit language. Since the concepts elaborated by Siddharth were within the Indian context, and in this context Sanskrit had a pre-eminent position as the medium of expression, the followers of Buddha could not avoid mixing Pali, Ardhmagadhi and Sanskrit in their actual communication. This resulted in a new style of Sanskrit called Buddhist Sanskrit, a style that was understood by both the common people and the elites of the time. Bilingualism and multilingualism, thus, evolved as a unique product of the genius of the Indian people.

People have been using more than one language simultaneously and the influence of one language on the other could be seen in almost all the languages in the form of loan words. We find that the States in India have never been linguistically homogeneous. There has been always some form of multilingualism, between languages or dialects or both. At present there is not a single State or Union Territory that is monolingual. Take, for example, the state of Haryana. This state may be divided into six or more linguistic or dialectal regions. Braj is spoken in

Faridabad, Mewati is spoken in Gurgaon, Bagri is spoken in Hissar and Sirsa, Bangru is spoken in Rohtak, Bhiwani, and Jind, and Khari Boli is spoken in Ambala and Yamuna Nagar. Amidst all this dialectal diversity, there is an accepted standard dialect of Hindi that is recognized and used as the official language of the state. Thus, in India, each state is multilingual and the linguistic majority of one state may be a linguistic minority in another state.

## 6. OFFICIAL LANGUAGE POLICIES AND MINORITY LANGUAGES

Usually each State recognizes one state language for official purposes, and this position is, indeed, contrary to the multilingual nature of the states. However, in reality, most of the states have accepted more than one language for official purposes to meet the aspirations of their linguistic minorities. But the use of the minority languages is usually restricted to a particular district or districts within the state. There are safeguards provided to the linguistic minorities in the Constitution of India. A Commission for the Linguistic Minorities has been constituted under the provisions of the Constitution. The Constitution makes provisions for the use of the minority languages at the district level and blow, like the Municipalities, Tehsils, etc. where a linguistic minority constitutes 15 to 20% of the total population of the district. Important government notices, rules and other publications should be published in the minority languages.

According to the Kerala Official Language Act, 1969, Malayalam and English are treated as the official languages of the state without prejudice to the Articles 345 and 347 of the Constitution of India. The Tamil and Kannada minorities of the state may use their respective languages for their correspondence with the state government in the Secretariat and with the head of the departments. The replies to such correspondence shall be sent in the respective minority language. There is a language cell in the state that is responsible for translating the state laws, ordinances, bills, statutory notifications and other important documents in Malayalam as well as in the minority languages of the state. Besides English, Hindi, Urdu, and Malayalam, these minority languages are also used as media of instruction as well as first language in the school system.

In Andhra Pradesh, Telugu is the official language and the state translation department has six language sections, namely, Telugu, Urdu, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, and Tamil. Translations of important acts, rules, regulations, notifications, representations are undertaken in the six languages. Similarly most of the states have provisions for translation into minority languages from the dominant languages of the states and vice versa. Through such administrative machinery, efforts are made to ensure that the minorities are not at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the people who speak and use the dominant language of the state. Whenever the minorities felt discriminated against, they raise their voice through legal and political means, taking recourse to the safeguards under Article 16 (1) of the constitution.

There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state. The leaders of the linguistic minorities all over the country have, time and again, argued that the imposition of any language qualification in the dominant language as a pre-requisite for public employment is unlawful and illegal. One could also argue that such an imposition works against the freedom of movement of citizens under Article 19 (1). There have been certain decisions of the Supreme Court that largely support the views of the linguistic minorities. Presently, the trend is not to impose a specific language requirement as a pre-requisite for employment, but to train the officials compulsorily in the official language of the state once the candidates are recruited to the jobs under the government.

In essence, the language policies in the states of the Indian Union certainly protect the rights of the linguistic minorities. However, it is important for the minorities that they learn the dominant language of their state for their own social and career benefits. Unfortunately, many minority communities tend to narrow their choice of languages at the school level to English, Hindi, Sanskrit, and/or French, ignoring the dominant language of the state. They seem to be concerned more about the instrumental values that a language may have beyond the horizon of the State, in which they live, seek and enjoy the educational facilities. Because of this change in attitude (noticed simultaneously also among the people who speak the dominant language of the state as their mother tongue), the contours of Indian multilingualism are fast changing. There is a lack of genuine desire to learn other Indian languages. While the laws and constitutional safeguards for the linguistic minorities are rather

very effective in protecting the rights of the minorities, and in maintaining the linguistic identities of the minorities, the linguistic minorities themselves need to develop a better understanding of the overall needs of their communities.

## 7. MULTILINGUALISM IN EDUCATION

The Indian education system is truly multilingual in its character. The Bombay Municipal Corporation runs primary schools in nine languages. The Karnataka State runs primary schools in eight languages. The secondary schools in West Bengal give their students the option to choose from 14 languages. The three-language formula widely in the country aims at developing and strengthening the multilingual character of our educational system.

There are many problems in implementing the three-language formula. For example, there is no reference to the mother tongue or home language in the formula. There is no reference to the classical languages and foreign languages. Tamilnadu teaches only Tamil and English, and Gujarat follows it with Gujarati and Hindi. Many Hindi states substitute Sanskrit, a classical language for a modern Indian language. With the expanded version of the eighth schedule of the constitution, more languages are added to the mix, but there is hardly any improvement in the situation.

There are 500 Central Schools with the bilingual medium consisting of English and Hindi. There is also a compulsory language, Sanskrit, in addition. There are 500 Navodaya Vidyalayas where some competence is English and Hindi is imparted simultaneously. But the students who graduate from these schools go to the English medium colleges, because there is no college in the country that offers a bilingual medium of instruction. The Indian education system blocks multilingualism as one moves into higher education.

Srivastava (1994) writes about the Hindi region in India.

> This region attests two types of bilingualism, where literacy and fluency in both languages are aimed at, but wherein first language is restricted to the topics related to the social sciences and the second language to the science subjects ... (Mono-literate form of bilingualism) is confined primarily to the preschool children of village school, . . . the partial type of bilingual education has been the general norm of pre-university education system. (At the university level) a partial type of bilingualism (is practiced), where in the second language replaces the first language in all subjects of formal teaching programs

The picture given in the above statement is true for all Indian languages, with some small changes here and there.

## 8. WHITHER MINORITY LANGUAGES?

I wrote in an earlier section of this paper that the constitutional provisions have helped the maintenance of the minority languages in the country. But this is true only to a certain extent. Some damaging pictures have begun to emerge in recent years, especially with regard to the use of the minority languages in the school system. There is not a single state that does not have linguistic minorities, but not all the minority languages are offered in schools as media of instruction or as first language. When we compare the findings of the educational surveys conducted by the NCERT and other agencies with the number of speakers of the minority languages in various states, it becomes obvious that there are many minority languages with substantial populations that are not made available as the medium of instruction or as first language. For example, in Delhi, only English, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, and Gujarati were taught as first language as per the Third Educational Survey, but some of these are not taught as first language according to the Sixth Educational Survey. There are several languages in Delhi with substantial population that do not find any place at all in the school system. The situation in the other states is not encouraging either.

Neither the school authorities nor the state governments should bear the blame exclusively for this state of affairs. The attitude of the speakers of the minority languages is also responsible for this condition. The speakers of the minority

languages seem to prefer English to their own languages. And in this they join the mainstream of the country! In addition, there have been well established traditions in the country that encourage people to learn the dominant language for purposes outside their homes and use the mother tongue in their home domain. In the states like Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Sikkim, mother tongue is the medium of instruction in less than 50% of the schools. Consider these figures: Sikkim 1.95%, Arunachal Pradesh 2.89%, Goa 14%, Jammu and Kashmir 19.45%, Meghalaya 42.03%, and Nagaland 43% used mother tongue as media of instruction at the upper primary stage. Major languages such as English and Hindi and the other Scheduled VIII languages occupy a place of importance even in the states where the speakers of the non-scheduled language are in a majority.

Does it mean that these minority languages are dying out? Not certainly. Or, perhaps, to some extent. It appears that the speakers of minority languages seem to have arrived at the conclusion that for maintaining their language, and their language and ethnic identity, it is not necessary for them to use their as the medium of instruction or to learn it as first language in the school system. Time alone will tell us whether such an attitude is going to help them maintain their languages in the long run.

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*J. C. Sharma, Ph.D.*
*Central Institute of Indian Languages*
*Mysore 570006, India*
*E-mail: sharma@ciil.stpmy.soft.net*

# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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## AN INTRODUCTION TO SIRMAURI - GRAMMATICAL GENDER

### J. C. Sharma, Ph.D.

### 1. SIRMAURI LANGUAGE AREA

Sirmauri is the name given to the language spoken in the erstwhile princely state of Sirmaur in Himachal Pradesh. For centuries, Sirmaur functioned as a princely State, and now it is one of the districts of Himachal Pradesh, with Nahan as its headquarters.

The district lies among the outer Himalayan ranges between 77x01' 12" and 77x49' 40" East longitude and 30x22' 30" and 31x01' 20" North latitude. The district, except for the broad valley of the Kayarda Dun, is a mountainous region with deep valleys lying between ranges of varying elevations. The greatest length from west to east is 77 kms. And the maximum width from the north to the south is 80 kms.

On its north side lies the Simla Hills, on the east the Tons River, dividing it from the Dehradun district of Uttar Pradesh, from which the river Yamuna also separates it on the southeast. The Ambala district of Haryana lies on its south, while on the northwest Kasumpti of Mahasu region is located. Sirmauri language is spoken also in the Chaupal area of Simla district. The total area of the district, according to the Survey of India documents, is 2836 sq. kms. The total population of this district of this district was 1,66,077 in 1951 census, and 1,97,551 in 1961 census.

### 2. THE GIRI RIVER

It is important that I make some mention to the Giri River. The Giri River divides Sirmauri in almost two equal parts from the northwest to the southeast. These parts are called Giriwar and Giripar or Trans-Giri. The people of these two parts differ considerably in their characteristics. The Trans-Giri or the Giripar territory comprises wild mountainous region that lies between the great range culminating in the Chur peak and the Giri River. From the great peak (11,982 feet in height) run two loft ranges, one in north and another in northwest. Direct communication between the people groups is rather sparse until recent times, and this has led to the development of somewhat related speech varieties to develop into "languages."

### 3. SURROUNDING LANGUAGES

The language of the erstwhile Jubbal state is similar to Sirmauri. Sirmauri has Baghati language to its northwest. Western Hindi to its southwest, south and southeast, and Jannsari to its east. The dialect spoken in the Chisgiri area is called DharThi and the dialect spoken in the Trans Giri is called Giripari. There are two main dialects of Sirmauri, namely DharThi spoken in Giriwar area, and Giripari spoken in Giripar area. It appears that these dialects or sub-dialects do not differ in grammar. However, dharThi seems to have been more influenced by Hindi, whereas the Giripari dialect seems to be pure Pahari. Grierson identified yet another dialect of Sirmaur, Bishau, but he did not consider it different from Giripari.

### 4. GENDER IN INDO-ARYAN LANGUAGES

Classical Sanskrit had a highly symmetrical three-way distinction with regard to gender-number system. In the Middle Indo-Aryan stage languages, Pali and Prakrit,

this system broke down into a two-way contrast.

New Indo-Aryan languages can be classified into three groups based on their grammatical marking of gender:

1. Languages in which the gender is not grammatical, but it is only a semantic category. For example, the languages of Eastern Indo-Aryan subgroup such as Assamese, Bengali, and Oriya belong to this group
2. Languages, which have a two-way grammatical gender, that is, masculine and feminine Hindi and Panjabi may be cited as examples of this group
3. Languages which have three-way grammatical genders, like Marathi, Gujarati, and Bhili.

Among the Pahari group of languages, there are a number of languages like Churahi, Pangawali, Chinali, and Sirmauri, which have a three-way distinction with regard to gender

Gender goes along with number and it is marked in various word classes like nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, and, interestingly enough, with some of the post-positions that function as genitive, locative, and ablative markers. Generally the person-number also suffixes go together. These word categories show the agreement of gender-number with other word categories in syntactic constructions like phrases and sentences.

## 5. APPLICATION

Gender distinctions followed in various Indo-Aryan languages are used to group the Indo-Aryan languages under various sub-groups. While, at times, the grammatical gender distinctions may be blurred in some constructions, the native speakers do acquire the distinctions easily However, a Sirmauri speaker learning Hindi, for example, will have some problem in switching from his native Sirmauri three-way distinctions to the two-way grammatical gender distinction in standard Hindi The textbook writers and teachers can use the outline of Sirmauri gender distinction presented in this paper to make a sensible comparison between Sirmauri and standard Hindi, and teach Hindi in an effective manner

The present paper on the grammatical gender used in Sirmauri is based on the Giripari variety of Sirmauri spoken in Shilai and Sangrah tehsils of Sirmaur district Gender is exhibited by various word categories such as nouns, pronouns (III person), adjectives (variable), some verbs, some postpositions and some adverbs. I propose to present first of all how gender is marked in different words categories and then show how gender concordance occurs between these word categories

## 6. NOUNS

As in most Indo-Aryan languages, each noun in Sirmauri inherently belongs to one of the three genders. The gender system in Sirmauri is partly semantically based and partly morphologically based. Inflected nouns usually ending in /-a/ are masculine, ending in /-I/ are feminine, and ending in /-U/ are neuter

The semantic criterion (natural sex) takes precedence over the morphological criterion. It is not simple to identify the gender of a noun. For gender determination, one has to depend upon the listing or knowledge of the native speaker and the context. Morphologically, gender is marked by certain suffixes using which nouns belonging to the feminine gender may be derived from the masculine forms Since the feminine forms have greater number of semantic distinctions relating to size (small, smallest, diminutive, etc.), it appears that positing the masculine form of the noun, as the base to derive the feminine forms is the simplest process. That is, some derivational suffixes mark diminutive along with the gender. /-I/ suffix usually marks the small size and -U the smallest, feminine, and neuter

1. Masculine and feminine nouns generally correspond to the natural sex of the animate nouns. No such rule can be offered in respect of the neuter nouns For example, /ghoRa/ means 'horse' and /ghoRI/ means 'mare.' /bIlaRa/ stands for 'he-cat' and /bIlaRI/ stands for 'she-cat '
2. The nouns denoting profession such as oilman, washerman, barber, carpenter, butcher, poet, doctor, etc , are masculine The feminine forms

may be derived from these. For example, /comarTa/ means 'cobbler' and /comarTi/ stands for 'cobbler woman.' /poToan/ means 'village land officer,' and /poToarIn/ means 'the female village land officer.'

3  Most of the nouns ending in /-a/ denote masculine, ending in /-I/ and /-aNi/ feminine, and those ending in /U/ neuter. Masculine nouns that end in /-a/ take /-I/ for their feminine correspondence. For example, /dada/ means 'elder brother,' and /dadI/ means 'elder sister.' /nadRa/ stands for 'younger brother,' and /nadir/ for 'younger sister.'

4.  Neuter nouns may end in /-U/. For example, /choTU/ means 'child,' and /bIralTu/ means 'kitten.'

5.  The nouns that denote 'big size' belong to the masculine gender, the diminutive forms derived from these that mean 'small' are assigned to the feminine gender, and the forms that denote the smallest size are assigned to the neuter gender. Consider the following examples.

| Masculine (big) | Feminine (small) | Neuter (smallest) |
|---|---|---|
| /Topa/ cap | /Topi/ cap | /TopU/ cap |
| /khaT/ cot | /khaTI/ cot | /khaTlU/ cot |
| /balTa/ bucket | /balTI/ bucket | /balTu/ bucket |
| /tava/ frying pan | /tavI/ frying pan | /tavTU/ frying pan |
| /thal/ metal plate | /thaLI/metal plate | /thaLTU/ metal plate |

## 7. PRONOUNS

The pronominal forms such as demonstrative pronouns (proximate), demonstrative pronouns (remote), and all the pronouns with the genitive marking suffix take gender-number suffixes.

For example, /eja/ means 'this' (mas.); /ejI/ means 'this' (fem.), and /ejU/ means 'this' (neut.). Also, /seja/ means 'this' (mas.), /sejI/ 'that' (fem.), and /seju/ 'that' (neut.).

## 8. ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are usually used to modify the nouns. There are two kinds of adjectives in Sirmauri, based on the agreement the adjectives have with the following nouns.

1.  Invariable adjectives. /lal/ 'red,' /Ek/ 'one,' /do/ 'two.'
2.  Variable adjectives. For example, the root /ciTTa/ 'white (mas.),' /ciItI/ 'white (fem.),' and /ciTTU/ 'white (neut.).'

Consider the following examples.

| Masculine | Feminine | Neuter |
|---|---|---|
| /ciTTa/ white | /ciTTI/ white | /ciTTU/ white |
| /ghalTa/ small | /ghalTI/ small | /ghalTU/ small |
| /nanRa/ small | /nanRI/ small | /nanRU/ small |
| /sELa/ cold | /sELI/ cold | /sELU/ cold |
| /reka/ other | /rekI/ other | /rekU/ other |
| /kaLa/ black | /kaLI/ black | /kaLU/ black |
| /pIULa/ yellow | /pIULI/ yellow | /pIULU/ yellow |

## 9. POSTPOSITIONS

In Sirmauri, there are a number of postpositions that carry gender distinctions. These postpositions are used to denote genitive, locative, and ablative cases.

| Case | Masculine | Feminine | Neuter |
|------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Genitive | /ra/ of | /rI/ | /rU/ |
| Locative PP | /da/ in, on | /dI/ | /dU/ |
| Ablative | /sa/ from | /sI/ | /sU/ |

## 10. VERBS

As stated above, gender goes with the number in word categories. Some verbal stems like infinitives, imperfectives as well as perfective participles, simple future, progressive and past tense auxiliaries take gender-number suffixes.

### Infinitives /khu-/ 'eat'

| Gender | Singular | Plural |
|--------|----------|--------|
| Masculine | khaNa | khaNE |
| Feminine | khaNI | KhaNi |
| Neuter | khaNU | kaNe |

### Imperfective Participle /kAr-U/ 'do'

| Gender | Singular | Plural |
|--------|----------|--------|
| Masculine | kArda | kArdE |
| Feminine | kArdI | kAardi |
| Neuter | kArdU | kArde |

### Perfective Participle

| Gender | Singular | Plural |
|--------|----------|--------|
| Masculine | kArya | kAryE |
| Feminine | kArI | kAri |
| Neuter | kAryU | kArye |

## Future Tense

Future tense is marked by /-b-/ in first person and by /-l-/ in second and third person.

| Person | Masculine Singular | Masculine Plural |
|--------|--------------------|--------------------|
| I Person | kAruba | kArube |
| Second/third Person | kArula | kArule |

## Progressive Aspect

There are two progressive auxiliaries /ro-/, and /lo-/ that take gender-number suffixes. The progressive auxiliary /ro-/ occurs with intransitive verbs and the progressive auxiliary /lo-/ occurs with the transitive verbs.

## 11. GENDER AGREEMENT

When verbal forms are inflected, these show either gender-number or person-number agreement with the word class occurring with it in a syntactic construction.

1. **Subject-Verb Agreement.** All the nouns and pronouns functioning as subject will have gender agreement with the verb.

> mama hoTe roa/ 'Mother's brother has gone.'
> mamE hoTe roE/ 'Mother's brothers have gone.'

2. **Object-verb Agreement.** In all the constructions where the subject is in the oblique form with some case marker, the verb agrees with the object. When the construction is without an object, as in the case of the intransitive verb construction, the verb will have neuter gender.

> merE roti khaNi 'I have to eat bread.'

Note that roTi and khaNi are marked for feminine gender.

3. **Adjective - Noun Agreement**

In a noun phrase, the adjectives of the variable class take gender-number according to the gender-number of the noun with which it occurs as a modifier.

> kaLa ghoRa 'black horse'

In this phrase ghoRa is marked for masculine singular, and so the preceding adjective is also marked for masculine singular. Compare this with kalI ghoRI in which both the adjective and the noun are feminine singular terms.

4. The present and past participial forms and ordinals also behave like the adjectives, taking gender-number agreement suffixes. Consider the following examples.

> boeyondu khEt 'the cultivated field.'

khEt is neuter singular and so the participial form that precedes it, namely, boeyondu 'the cultivated' is also in neuter singular.

5. All genitive-marking postpositions added to the nouns and pronouns behave like the adjectives. The possessor shows the agreement of gender-number with the head noun that is possessed in a noun phrase. Consider the following example:

> maTi ru loTkU 'pot of mud,' literally, mud. of. pot.

6. **Agreement of postpositions.**

The postpositions inflected for gender-number are in agreement with the subject noun as well as with the sentence compliment that could be noun or adjective. Locative /d-/ shows agreement with other categories as to gender-number. Consider the following:

> Eso ghari di een pacci 'three leaves in this branch.'

di stands for feminine plural, and pacci 'leaves' is also a feminine plural term.

/s-/ is an ablative and instrumental marker postposition. This also takes the gender-number suffixes depending upon the noun.

## 12. CONCLUSION

1. Sirmauri presents an interesting gender marking system. However, the three-way gender marking system in itself is not peculiar to Sirmauri Languages belonging to the Bhili group and some languages of Himachal Pradesh such as Churahi, Pangwali, Chambeali also share this feature with Sirmauri.
2. Unlike the major Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindi and Panjabi, in Sirmauri we find that the postpositions marking locative, ablative, etc., also

mark gender-number distinction agreement with the following known as well as verb.

3. Unlike many Indo-Aryan languages, Sirmauri transitive verbs also show agreement with the object in progressive aspect as well as future tense. The subject occurs with agentive suffix. In many other Indo-Aryan languages the agreement of the object is only in the perfective aspect.

4. A detailed study of Sirmauri and other languages of the region will show how such features are part of the mutual intelligibility that is noticed between these languages.

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*J. C. Sharma, Ph.D.*
*Central Institute of Indian Languages*
*Manasagangotri*
*Mysore 570006, India*
*E-mail: sharma@ciil.stpmy.soft.net*